

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants respectfully request further examination and reconsideration in view of the instant response. Claims 1–57 remain pending in the present case. Claims 1–57 are rejected.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-10, 12-16, 18-21, 24-25, 27-28, 30-31, 34-35, 37-48 and 50-57

Per the instant Office Action, Claims 1-10, 12-16, 18-21, 24-25, 27-28, 30-31, 34-35, 37-48 and 50-57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,549,916 by Sedlar et al. (referred to hereinafter as “Sedlar”) in view of United States Patent No. 6,941,304 by Gainey et al., (hereinafter referred to as “Gainey”). Claims 1, 21, 35, and 48 are independent claims. Claims 2-10, 12-16, 18-20, 24-25, 27-28, 30, 31, 34, 37, and 50-57 are dependent on independent Claims 1, 21, 35, and 48 and include the recitations of independent Claims 1, 21, 35, and 48. Hence, by demonstrating that Sedlar and Gainey do not show or suggest the limitations of Claims 1, 21, 35, and 48, it is also demonstrated that Sedlar and Gainey do not show or suggest the embodiments of Claims 1-10, 12-16, 18-21, 24-25, 27-28, 30-31, 34-35, 37-48 and 50-57.

“As reiterated by the Supreme Court in *KSR*, the framework for the objective analysis for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103 is stated in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966). Obviousness is a question of law based on underlying factual inquiries” including “[a]scertaining the differences between the claimed invention and the prior art” (MPEP 2141(II)). “In determining the differences between the prior art and the

claims, the question under 35 U.S.C. 103 is not whether the differences themselves would have been obvious, but whether the claimed invention as a whole would have been obvious” (emphasis in original; MPEP 2141.02(I)). Applicants note that “[t]he prior art reference (or references when combined) need not teach or suggest all the claim limitations, however, Office personnel must explain why the difference(s) between the prior art and the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art” (emphasis added; MPEP 2141(III)).

Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed embodiments as a whole overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as the claims are neither taught nor suggested by Sedlar and Gainey, and that Office personnel have not explained why differences would have been obvious. Independent Claim 1 recites (emphasis added),

A method for enhancing communication within a community,
the method comprising:

- (a) establishing a hierarchical structure for organizing communications between a plurality of users within the community;
- (b) distributing control through selection of inherited parameters of said hierarchical structure to at least one of said plurality of users, wherein said inherited parameters comprise parameters defining access by said plurality of users to said communications organized within said hierarchical structure;
- (c) storing in said hierarchical structure at least a portion of said communications received from said plurality of users from at least one of a plurality of input devices in relation to at least one of a plurality of topics that is user selected;
- (z) providing a link to a resource associated with said at least a portion of said communications that is stored, wherein said link is available for access by authorized users of said plurality of users;
- (d) prioritizing said at least a portion of said communications within said hierarchical structure, wherein an initial thread of said plurality of communications is assigned a higher

priority than a response to a thread of said plurality of communications;

- (e) presenting to at least a one of said plurality of users through said at least one of a plurality of input devices a selected portion of said communications stored in said hierarchical structure, wherein said selected portion of said communications are related under said at least one of a plurality of topics that is user selected;
- (f) enabling dynamic interaction through further contributions of communications by said at least a one of said plurality of users through said at least one of a plurality of input devices in response to presentation of said selected portion of said communications within said hierarchical structure, wherein said further contributions of communications are stored and accessed within said hierarchical structure in relation to said topic, wherein said further contributions are associated with at least one discussion thread comprising a recorded communication under said at least one of a plurality of topics that is conducted between participating users of said plurality of users; and
- (g) presenting to at least a one of said plurality of users at least a portion of said plurality of communications based on said prioritization.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as the claims are neither taught nor suggested by Sedlar and Gainey. Applicants submit that Sedlar does not teach “prioritizing said at least a portion of said communications within said hierarchical structure, wherein an initial thread of said plurality of communications is assigned a higher priority than a response to a thread of said plurality of communications” and “presenting to at least a one of said plurality of users at least a portion of said plurality of communications based on said prioritization” (emphasis added), elements of Claim 1. Also, Applicants submit that Sedlar does not teach, “an initial priority-based content placement module for determining a priority assignment for an initial communication of said plurality of communications” and “a response priority-based content placement module for determining a priority assignment for a response communication of said plurality of communications, wherein said priority assignment for a response

communication is lower than said priority assignment for an initial communication”

(emphasis added), elements of Claim 21. Furthermore, Applicants submit that Sedlar does not teach, prioritizing an order of said portion of said information, “wherein an initial thread of said information is assigned a higher priority than a response to a thread of said information” and “presenting said portion of said information that is ordered to said user for review, wherein said presentation is based on said prioritization” (emphasis added), elements of Claims 35 and 48.

Applicants submit that Sedlar teaches a file system with hierarchical indexing [Col 7, lines 1-5], but does not teach, describe or suggest the embodiments of the claimed invention. In particular, the instant Office Action recites that “Sedlar does not explicitly show (claim 1) wherein an initial thread of said plurality of communications is assigned a higher priority than a response to a thread of said plurality of communications; and presenting to at least a one of said plurality of users at least a portion of said plurality of communications based on said prioritization,” [page 5, lines 11-15].

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that Gainey does not overcome the shortcomings of Sedlar and Gainey. Applicants understand Gainey to teach an “enterprise email system processes incoming email using a set of configurable rules that examine each message for a specific attribute state condition and invoke a configurable action when the attribute satisfies the condition,” [Abstract, FIG. 4]. Specifically, Applicants submit that Gainey teaches “[t]he incoming email receiver 120 makes sure that no routing rule actions conflict with each other” [Col. 6, lines 15-18], and “[a]ction priority is determined by the rule’s order in the rule list,” [Col. 6, lines 19-20]. Applicants understand Gainey to teach a

prioritization of rules, rather than a prioritization of communications, as cited by the claims. Furthermore, Applicants understand Gainey to teach “[k]eep thread ownership—Specifies if the same user that responds to a particular incoming email message should receive all subsequent response. Placing an identifier in the subject or body field of the outgoing response email enables the mail receiver to identify and reply to the outgoing response email,” [Col. 7, lines 55-60]. Applicants submit that placing an identifier in the subject or body field is not the same as “an initial thread of said plurality of communications is assigned a higher priority than a response to a thread of said plurality of communications,” as is claimed, for at least because an identifier has an arbitrary priority rather than a higher priority.

As Sedlar and Gainey do not teach each and every claim limitation of Claim 1 (as discussed above), and as Office personnel have not explained why difference(s) between the prior art and the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, and as Claims 21, 35, and 48 recite similar elements as Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 21, 35, and 48 overcome the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection. As Claims 2-10, 12-16, 18-20, 24-25, 27-28, 30, 31, 34, 37, and 50-57 are pending from an allowable base Claims and reciting additional features, Applicants respectfully submit that 2-10, 12-16, 18-20, 24-25, 27-28, 30, 31, 34, 37, and 50-57 overcome the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-10, 12-16, 18-21, 24-25, 27-28, 30-31, 34-35, 37-48 and 50-57 are allowable.

35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 11, 36 and 49

Per the instant Office Action, Claims 11, 36 and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sedlar, Gainey and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,466,932 B1 by Dennis et al. (referred to hereinafter as “Dennis”). Claims 11, 36 and 49 are dependent on independent Claims 1, 35 and 48, respectively, and include the recitations of independent Claims 1, 35 and 48. Hence, by demonstrating that Sedlar, Gainey and Dennis do not show or suggest the limitations of Claims 1, 35 and 48, it is also demonstrated that Sedlar, Gainey, and Dennis do not show or suggest the embodiments of Claims 11, 36 and 49.

As described above, Sedlar and Gainey do not teach or describe the embodiments of the claimed invention. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that Dennis does not overcome the shortcomings of Sedlar and Gainey. Applicants understand Dennis to describe an implementation of group policy whereby policy settings for a policy recipient may be accumulated into a specific order by inheriting policy from higher container, which may enforce their policy settings over those of lower containers, [Abstract]. In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that Dennis does not teach, describe or suggest “prioritizing said at least a portion of said communications within said hierarchical structure, wherein an initial thread of said plurality of communications is assigned a higher priority than a response to a thread of said plurality of communications” and “presenting to at least a one of said plurality of users at least a portion of said plurality of communications based on said prioritization“, elements of Claim 1. Also, Applicants submit that Dennis does not teach, prioritizing an order of said portion of said information, “wherein an initial thread of said information is assigned a higher priority than a response to a thread of said information” and

“presenting said portion of said information that is ordered to said user for review, wherein said presentation is based on said prioritization”, elements of Claims 35 and 48.

As Sedlar, Gainey, and Dennis do not teach each and every claim limitation of the Claims 1, 35, and 48 (as discussed above), and as Office personnel have not explained why difference(s) between the prior art and the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, and as Claims 11, 36, and 49 are dependent, respectively, on these claims, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 11, 36 and 49 overcome the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 11, 36, and 49 are allowable as pending from allowable base Claims and reciting additional features.

35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 17 and 29

Per the instant Office Action, Claims 17 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sedlar, Gainey, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,081,832 A by Gilchrist et al. (referred to hereinafter as “Gilchrist”). Claims 17 and 29 are dependent on independent Claims 1 and 21, respectively, and include the recitations of independent Claims 1 and 21. Hence, by demonstrating that Sedlar, Gainey, and Gilchrist do not show or suggest the limitations of Claims 1 and 21, it is also demonstrated that Sedlar, Gainey, and Gilchrist do not show or suggest the embodiments of Claims 17 and 29.

As described above, Sedlar and Gainey do not teach, describe or suggest the embodiments of the claimed invention. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that Gilchrist does not overcome the shortcomings of Sedlar and Gainey. Applicants understand

Gilchrist to describe a framework for defining an e-mail message as a number of distinct object, each of which contains information that describes some portion of the message, [Abstract]. Also, Applicants understand Gilchrist to describe, “[some] objects may be active, meaning that they embody their own thread of control. That is, such objects are not simply sequential. Active objects may have a variety of concurrency characteristics, [Col. 43, lines 50-54]. In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that Gilchrist does not teach, describe or suggest “prioritizing said at least a portion of said communications within said hierarchical structure, wherein an initial thread of said plurality of communications is assigned a higher priority than a response to a thread of said plurality of communications” and “presenting to at least a one of said plurality of users at least a portion of said plurality of communications based on said prioritization,” elements of Claim 1. Also, Applicants submit that Gilchrist does not teach, “an initial priority-based content placement module for determining a priority assignment for an initial communication of said plurality of communications” and “a response priority-based content placement module for determining a priority assignment for a response communication of said plurality of communications, wherein said priority assignment for a response communication is lower than said priority assignment for an initial communication,” elements of Claim 21.

As Sedlar, Gainey, and Gilchrist do not teach each and every claim limitation of the Claims 1 and 21 (as discussed above), and as Office personnel have not explained why difference(s) between the prior art and the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, and as Claims 17 and 29 are dependent, respectively, on Claims 1 and 21, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 17 and 29 overcome the 35 U.S.C.

§103(a) rejection. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 17 and 29 are allowable as pending from allowable base Claims and reciting additional features.

35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 22-23, 26 and 32-33

Per the instant Office Action, Claims 22-23, 26 and 32-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sedlar, Gainey, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,718,535 B1 by Underwood (referred to hereinafter as “Underwood”). Claims 22-23, 26 and 32-33 are dependent on independent Claim 21, and include the recitations of independent Claim 21. Hence, by demonstrating that Sedlar, Gainey, and Underwood do not show or suggest the limitations of Claim 21, it is also demonstrated that Sedlar, Gainey, and Underwood do not show or suggest the embodiments of Claims 22-23, 26 and 32-33.

As described above, Sedlar and Gainey do not teach, describe or suggest the embodiments of the claimed invention. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that Underwood does not overcome the shortcomings of Sedlar and Gainey. Applicants understand Underwood to describe a system and method for providing an activity framework, [Abstract]. In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that Underwood does not teach, describe or suggest “an initial priority-based content placement module for determining a priority assignment for an initial communication of said plurality of communications” and “a response priority-based content placement module for determining a priority assignment for a response communication of said plurality of communications, wherein said priority assignment for a response communication is lower than said priority assignment for an initial communication,” elements of Claim 21.

As Sedlar, Gainey, and Underwood do not teach each and every claim limitation of the Claim 21 (as discussed above), and as Office personnel have not explained why difference(s) between the prior art and the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, and as Claims 22-23, 26 and 32-33 are dependent on Claim 21, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 22-23, 26 and 32-33 overcome the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 22-23, 26 and 32-33 are allowable as pending from an allowable base Claim and reciting additional features.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claims 1-57.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative if the Examiner believes such action would expedite resolution of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 8/8/2008

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